

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

06 July 2000

Projects Reviewed

View Ridge Play Area Renovation
Seattle University Skybridge
High Point Library
Office of Housing
Wallingford Steps
Growing Vine Street

Convened: 9:00am

Adjourned: 4:00pm

Commissioners Present

Rick Sundberg
Moe Batra
Ralph Cipriani
Gail Dubrow
Jeff Girvin
Nora Jaso

Staff Present

John Rahaim
Layne Cubell
Sally MacGregor

07 July 2000 Project: **Viewridge Play Area Renovation**

Phase: Briefing

Previous Review: 07 October 1999 (Play Area ADA Improvements Briefing)

Presenters: Eric Gold, Department of Parks and Recreation (DOPAR)

Attendees: Pan Kliment, Department of Parks and Recreation (DOPAR)

Time: .75 hour (SDC Ref. # 169 | DC00093)

Action: The Commission appreciates the presentation and makes the following comments and recommendations.

- **The Design Commission is pleased with the opportunity to see this type of project;**
- **supports the team's design process and the resulting level of community involvement;**
- **urges the team to explore a variety of creative options to articulate boundaries, using this as an opportunity to incorporate different types of landscaping, rather than enclosing the park with a fence;**
- **suggests that the design team focus on alternative entries into the park that address the functional needs of the users; and**
- **would like to see the project again at the end of schematic design.**

The Viewridge Playfield, located at 4408 Northeast 70th Street, is an existing park containing athletic fields, a play area with an existing wading pool, and a covered comfort station. The proposed renovations intend to update the play equipment and provide ADA accessibility. The funding for the project is a combined effort of Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) and community leveraged funds. The team hopes to use Neighborhood Matching Funds to enhance the scope of the project to meet the design expectations of the community.

The park's location has played an important part in determining the park layout; single family residences bound the northern and western edges of the park. The team's preliminary schematic design includes a low fence at the edge of the park to provide a physical barrier, preventing destructive pedestrian traffic through the landscaping at the perimeter; the primary parking is along Northeast 70th Street. The play area is south of the athletic fields, near the southern edge of the park. The design of the play area is driven by the functional relationships between the uses and age groups of the play equipment. The covered social space, primarily a resting space for parents, is centrally located to provide the parents a view of the children. The community, in agreement with the general conceptual design of the play area, has sent Requests For Proposal (RFP) to play equipment companies. The community hopes to have creative play structures, and would like the materials to include wood and metal, rather than plastic play equipment.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Would like to know why the social space has been pulled away from the wading pool.
 - The proponents stated that this design recognizes the flow of circulation between and through the spaces. Further stated that the wading pool, when in use, is usually ringed with people and this design provides space for that activity.

- Hopes that the perimeter of the pool will be lined with seating for the parents.
- Would like the paths within the play area continue past fixed points to emphasize connection between the play area and other areas of the park.
- Would like to see the design team accentuate the entries of the park to direct the desired pedestrian flow, rather than creating boundaries with fences that tell people where not to go.
 - Proponents stated that the entry point at the southwestern corner of the park is existing and is heavily used by the residents of the neighborhood. This entry has steps to navigate the two foot grade change. Proponents recognized that a central entry at the southern edge of the park would provide access to those parking along the street. Further stated that the community wants to establish a prominent entry at the southeast corner of the park in a future phase of the project.
- Would like the design team to not centralize the entry; thinks that a triage of entry points would be excessive. Feels that the team should look at the functional question of enclosure, and determine the points where it is necessary to protect people. Would like the design team to use landscaping to define edges, especially as an opportunity to create an enclosure around the two to five year old play area.
 - Proponents stated that the fence at the southern edge of the park is an edge created in response to traffic problems and pedestrians filtering in through the perimeter. Further stated that they do not want to segregate the different areas of the park.
- A minority of the Commission feels that a fence might be appropriate, as it would prevent the peripheral landscaping from being trampled.
- Would like the edge and perimeter of the park visually open, perhaps through the use of low vegetation. Feels that an open perimeter would allow the surrounding residents to observe the activities of the park, keeping it safe.
 - Proponents stated that the residents of the community, especially those along the western edge of the park, are primarily concerned about graffiti, rather than loiterers. Further stated that dense evergreens would provide a screened enclosure along the southern edge of the park.
- Would like to know what types of play equipment are under consideration; wonders if this is an opportunity for creativity within the park.
 - Proponents stated there are strict safety standards and requirements to follow for play equipment. Typically, creative equipment alternatives have not been successful or accepted.
- Feels that the design team could use the paths and paving as an opportunity to create some creativity in colors and textures.
 - Proponents stated that the Neighborhood Matching Fund and the community involvement are helping to fund these types of design options.
- Would like to know if there are restrooms.
 - Proponents stated that there are restrooms in the main shelter, east of the play area.
- Would like to know what the team has learned from previous projects about the design of wading pools.
 - Proponents stated that although there are no new wading pools planned for this and other parks, and existing wading pools will only be retrofitted, there is some opportunity

for creativity. Further stated that the team is studying certain amenities for wading pools, including shapes, siting, seating, and shading.

07 July 2000 Project: **Seattle University Skybridge**

Phase: Briefing

Previous Review: 20 April 2000 (Follow-Up Briefing); 17 February 2000 (Schematic Update); 02 May 1996 (Skybridge Request); 15 February 1996 (Skybridge Request)

Presenters: Al Bryant, BJSS Duarte Bryant
Dutch Duarte, BJSS Duarte Bryant
Joan Weiser, Lorig Associates

Attendees: Paul Janos, Department of Design Construction and Land Use (DCLU)
Jerry Pederson, Seattle University
Fred White, Seattle Transportation (SEATRAN)
Kevin Wittnam, BJSS Duarte Bryant
Bill Zosel, 12th Avenue Neighborhood Planning Stewardship Committee

Time: .5 hour (SDC Ref. # 170 | DC00154)

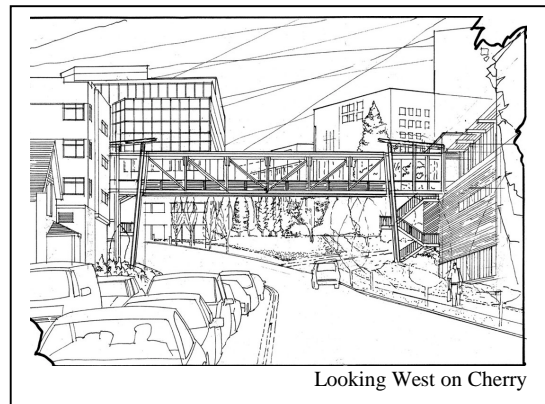
Action: The Commission sub-committee appreciates the presentation and recommends that the full Commission approve the following actions once a quorum is present.

- **The Commission appreciates the thoughtful response to previous Design Commission concerns and suggestions;**
- **appreciates the design changes that afford pedestrians a strong recognition of entry points;**
- **is supportive of the choice of materials and lighting; and**
- **recommends approval of the skybridge design as shown.**

Jeff Girvin recused himself from the proceedings.

Rick Sundberg did not participate in the Actions.

The project team for the Seattle University Skybridge, located at East Cherry Street at 11th Avenue, presented a revised design based on previous Design Commission reviews. The team has revised the design to de-emphasize the scale of the bridge and recognize the flow of pedestrian traffic. In order to encourage use of the bridge, the two stair towers and respective entry points have been accentuated as the bridge “bookends.” The design also includes landscaping at street level from 11th Avenue to 10th Avenue to prevent pedestrians crossing at grade. The design team has improved the lighting of the vertical circulation to accentuate these two pieces, and reduced the lighting within the bridge. Through further design investigation of the steel and truss system, the team stated that they consider the bridge a transitional element, rather than a component of one of the buildings on either side. Therefore, the team is trying to incorporate colors and materials that will complement these adjacent buildings, and allow the bridge to maintain its distinct character.



Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Would like to know if there is any glazing in the proposed bridge.

- Proponents stated that there is glazing on the uphill side of the bridge, and that the current design proposal incorporates an open rail on the eastern side.
- Would like to know why the two vertical circulation spaces at either side of the skybridge are not symmetrical.
 - Proponents stated that the differences account for the difference in grade.
- Agrees that choosing colors is difficult, and asks the design team if the green (shown as part of the color and material sample) is too industrial.
 - Proponents stated that this color is selected from the palette of the adjacent buildings, and when used, the greens tend to be more transparent than the sample. Further stated that they have not yet formally decided the colors of specific components, and they have hired a specialist to work with the color selection.
- Appreciates the changes in proportion and feels that the span has visually been shortened.

07 July 2000 Project: **High Point Library**

Phase: Schematics

Previous Review: 06 April 2000 (Pre-Design)

Presenter: Douglas Bailey, Seattle Public Library
 Brad Miller, Selkirk Miller Hayashi
 Lisa Richmond, Seattle Arts Commission (SAC)

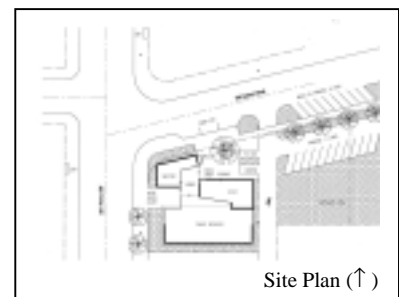
Attendees: Marilynne Gardner, City Budget Office
 Alex Harris, Seattle Public Library
 Timothy Myhr, Selkirk Miller Hayashi

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 221 | DC00112)

Action: The Commission appreciates the presentation and makes the following comments and recommendations.

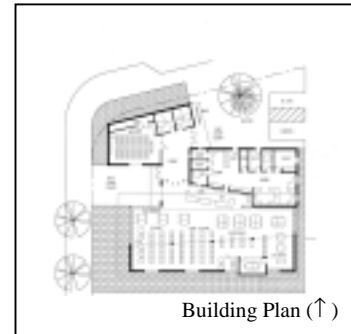
- **The Design Commission is pleased that the team addressed the majority of the concerns presented in the previous review;**
- **encourages the team to continue the dialogue with Walgreens, an abutting property owner, for joint use of parking;**
- **recognizes that although there is no neighborhood plan, the Commission commends the team for their efforts to include the community in the design process, and encourages the team to pursue innovative ways to promote more community involvement;**
- **recommends further investigation of the transit stops and pedestrian improvements;**
- **appreciates the library's elective art budget increase, and encourages early involvement of the artists of the Seattle Arts Commission, especially to explore the design of the entry court as a gathering space;**
- **if possible, would like the team to design the south wall to allow interaction between the indoors and outdoors;**
- **encourages the exploration of alternative types of trees for the entry court, and suggests that the choice of a tree significant as a cultural symbol could be used as a vehicle for participation from the neighborhood; and**
- **feels that the roof of the meeting room should be designed to complement the roof of the main portion of the library.**

The proposed project, the High Point Library, located at the intersection of 35th Avenue Southwest and Southwest Graham Street, will be a seven thousand square foot library. Many design objectives have been introduced in public meetings throughout the process, and the team hopes to meet these goals to create a strong public building within the community. The team stated that there are primary concerns about site development. Previously, the team considered requesting an alley vacation. The design presented does not require an alley vacation, but the future needs of the library may change. Currently, there is a temporary transformer at the southeast corner of the site. The team is working with Seattle City Light to accommodate the parking within the site, and the team is also discussing the possibility of sharing the parking to the south with Walgreens. Although there is no neighborhood plan, development in this area is rapidly progressing after previous stagnation. The Seattle

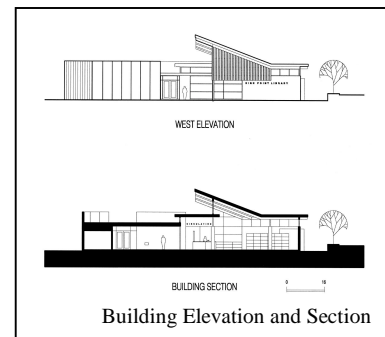


Housing Authority (SHA) has proposed new development, and is trying to expand public housing on both sides of 35th Avenue Southwest. The design team is working with Seattle Transportation (SEATLAN) to determine the possibility of pedestrian improvements, including crosswalks and transit stops. The library is concerned about having transit stops directly adjacent to the library, because there is considerable noise involved in the starting and stopping of the buses.

Responding to the site, the library design anchors the public corner and collects users from the east and west, which principally includes residents from the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) Housing. With public safety as a primary concern, the design team would like to improve the crosswalks near the library. The team has placed the parking to the east of the library, along Southwest Graham Street, an easily surveyed location, and they are considering angled-in parking from the street right of way. A drop-off location would be included at the parking entry from the arterial. The schematic generator for the plan is the program, and the library is arranged by function. The design team has pulled the meeting room, a closed compact space, to the corner. The voids created by this removal have become the entry courts facing East and West. The east entry court, which takes advantage of the north light, is a less formal entry, and has been designed as a public gathering space for the library. This area would contain bike racks, an elevated planter, and an outdoor reading area. The entry sequence within the library lobby would collect patrons from either entrance, and bring them into the main area of the library at the main circulation desk. The main public services of the library are contained within one long narrow bar to allow for maximum visibility. The ceiling above the children's space is lower, and part of the roof has been raised to bring more light into the building.



The design vocabulary of the building reflects certain site relationships. The team considers the library an analogy of containment, in response to the presence of water towers to the south of the site. The exterior of the library is composed of concrete panels, hand-finished to provide texture. The roof floats above these solid pieces, creating a clerestory to allow light into the main area of the library. The building is closed along the south wall to protect against the harsh light. The team proposes to screen the high northwest corner, and the east end of the axis, through window treatments or an art or architectural element. The design team intends to continue the street tree landscaping found on 35th Avenue Southwest, and plans to plant trees with a high tree canopy to provide visibility.



Seattle Arts Commission (SAC) is also currently involved in the design, and is in the process of selecting artists. *Percent for Art* has raised \$14,000 in funding, and through library private fundraising, the budget for art has doubled. SAC hopes to include art as a social aspect of the project, representing the diversity of the community, with the pieces having a dialogue with the street.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Applauds the team's success in increasing the art budget to \$28,000, and realizes that even this budget will have to stretch. Feels that the team should use this money to increase the significance and safety of the courtyard, and the team should design this space as an opportunity for enjoyment in the experience of public events.

- Would like to know the status of the alley vacation, and feels that the design should be resolved without an alley vacation.
 - Proponents stated that the team designed the project without relying on the alley vacation. Seattle Public Libraries does not want to delay the project. Further stated that the team is thinking of the library's future, and whether or not there will be opportunities to expand in the future.
- Realizes that the neighborhood's primary public investment is the need to provide a public gathering space for the community, but feels that the library could also provide individual space for personal reflection. In addition to the entry courtyard, would like to see an interior garden or some type of water feature at the south wall to create an indoor-outdoor dialogue, accentuated by landscaping.
- Is intrigued by the success of the dual entry, and appreciates the sculptural quality of the library, but is concerned that the meeting room could become a fortress.
- Would like the tree at the courtyard to be a special tree because of the significant location, and suggests a tree that would reflect light, perhaps one that has extremely yellow foliage in the fall.
- Would like to know how the eastern portion of the site could be developed, in conjunction with the Seattle Housing Authority site across Graham Street. Would like to know if there is a design opportunity to create an eastern approach to the building, rather than the community coming to the library through the parking lot.
- Would like to know if the design of the courtyard creates a space where people will sit comfortably, feeling safe, and questions whether or not the courtyard could be pulled into the building.
 - Proponents stated that this small courtyard contains many primary elements, including seating, a tree, and bike racks. The space has minimal corners, and is easily surveyed. Further stated that enclosing this space would probably create more problems. Proponents stated that the librarians are excited about this space, and intend to program activities for this space.
- Feels that the team should not over-simplify this space. The space around the tree should be conducive to reading, but should still remain a useful space.
- Would like the design team to explain the stepping wall, shown in plan.
 - Proponents stated that this is an example of the design vocabulary for the library. The team is working with the overlapping of the pre-cast panels, allowing it to flow around the corner, creating shadows.
- Would like the design team to bring some of the opening and closing qualities of the enclosure of the library to the meeting room at the corner. Would like know if the team has addressed signage, which is another critical component of the design that could signify the corner.
- Feels that through the consideration of future safety concerns, the walls should be aligned in the event that the library might need to be gated.
- Would like to know the location of the mechanical equipment.

07 July 2000**Commission Business**

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| ACTION ITEMS | A. Timesheets |
| | B. Minutes from 18 May 2000 and 15 June 2000 |
| ANNOUNCEMENTS | C. Commission Lunch Follow-up |
| | D. Other |
| DISCUSSION ITEMS | E. SPU Tree Planting Regulations/ Dewald/ DeCoster |
| | <p>Shane Dewald, Seattle Transportation (SEATLAN), and Dorothy DeCoster, Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) presented an overview of the spatial conflict in the location of street trees and underground utilities. They urged the Commissioners to remind proponents to resolve these conflicts early in the design process by speaking with the Department of Design Construction and Land Use (DCLU), SEATLAN, and SPU. To approach this conflict creatively, they asked the Commissioners for ideas about new technology and projects with which they are familiar. The Commissioners suggested involvement by other groups, including the Department of Neighborhoods, the Seattle Arts Commission, or University of Washington interns. The Commissioners also felt that new utilities should be designed in order to preserve existing trees. They also suggested that the rhythm and type of street tree should correspond with the adjacent buildings and general context. The Commissioners observed that there might be options, other than trees, to green a street.</p> |
| | F. DC Recruitment/ Cubell |

07 July 2000 Project: **Office of Housing**
 Phase: Briefing
 Presenter: Dahe Good, City Office of Housing
 Joanne LaTuchie, City Office of Housing
 Time: .75 hour

Action: The Commission appreciates the briefing and looks forward to future updates.

Currently, the Commission does not review each housing project; therefore, the Office of Housing (OH) presented this annual briefing. This region is prosperous due to the successes of local industries. Between 1995 and 1998, Seattle employment grew by 50,000 new jobs; during this time period only 7,900 new housing units were built. Vacancies have averaged 1% to 3% in most Seattle neighborhoods. Affordability of housing has changed accordingly. Housing being developed by the market consists primarily of luxury condominiums. The supply of affordable housing is shrinking due to increasing rents. Recognizing this, the Office of Housing's goal is to increase the supply of affordable housing, and OH is taking steps to bridge the housing gap created by these conditions.

They presented the Commissioners with several publications (*At Home in Seattle, a Report on the State of Housing* produced by OH, the *Affordable Housing Walking Tour of Downtown Seattle neighborhoods, Seattle Housing News- Housing Action Progress Report*), a flyer of recent openings, and a production report of 1999 and 2000 OH funded projects to date, including both new construction, and preservation and rehabilitation of existing buildings. There are two funding cycles per year, Fall and Spring. Most OH projects take two years to complete, from funding to construction. The OH is focused on affordable housing for households with low incomes. Solutions to this funding challenge include direct and soft subsidies; leveraging resources and strategies to reduce costs. Direct subsidies consist of Transferable Development Rights (TDR), housing bonuses, and direct funding; soft subsidies include tax abatements and exemptions, and other types of development incentives. The majority of direct subsidies are used to produce housing serving households earning at or below 50% of area median income. OH has been involved in dialogue with local lenders and banks about their efforts to develop lending programs for low-income homeowners. The representatives stated OH funded housing projects have priority status in the Department of Design Construction and Land Use (DCLU). Some projects are required to develop infrastructure (street and utility improvements) which benefits the public, but which is a drain on scarce housing funding resources. Due to the complexities of the public funding process, some additional costs can be attributed to requirements that slow down the process. They assured the Design Commission that typically these projects are of high design quality, because developers, lenders, and investors require high standards of materials, the Design Review Board provides community-based design reviews, and the architects are selected through a careful process. Commissioners suggested that a design competition would provide another opportunity for well designed low-income housing.

07 July 2000 Project: **Wallingford Steps**

Phase: Briefing

Presenter: Elizabeth Butler, Department of Neighborhoods

Brian Smith, Peter Ker Walker Landscape Architecture and Planning

Attendees: Lyle Bicknell, CityDesign

Marilynn Gardner, City Budget Office

Scott Kemp, Department of Design Construction and Land Use (DCLU)

Vince Lyons, Department of Design Construction and Land Use (DCLU)

Sandy Pernitz, P-Patch

Joe Taskey, Seattle Transportation, (SEATRAN)

Greg Waddell, Carlson Architects

Time: .5 hour (SDC Ref. # 220 | DC00039)

Action: The Commission appreciates the briefing and looks forward to the return of this project in September after schematic design is complete.

Wallingford Steps is a project that has been a neighborhood priority since 1988. Located at the end of Wallingford Avenue, these steps would help people navigate a steep slope, provide an easy access to Gas Works Park, and offer the community an open space for meeting and gathering. Triad and Zarrett are two companies developing mixed-use projects on each side of the steps. The design of Wallingford Steps is funded by City Opportunity Funds, while this project is also part of the Pro-Parks Levy that will be on the ballot this fall.

Peter Ker Walker is the landscape architecture firm for this project. The design mimics the street intersection turnarounds with circular forms incorporated in a series of stepped levels. These stairways contain seating, overlooks, sculptures, low landscaping, and axial lighting. The first intermediate level from the base accesses commercial retail space in the Triad development, and residential space in the Zarrett property. The next intermediate level offers an overlook, while the final level offers access to retail space at both properties. Finally, there is a ramp that continues to the sidewalk of Wallingford Avenue. The design complies with accessibility requirements through pedestrian lifts developed by Triad to link Northlake Way with the entrance of Wallingford Steps at Wallingford Avenue. The project proposes moving the Burke Gilman Trail Bike Path out towards the street, to create more space for this design.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Would like to know if Wallingford Steps would be partially funded by the adjacent developments.
 - Proponents stated that the adjacent developers would fund some of the improvements, including the ADA accessible lifts. The scale of contribution from each developer is related to the size of their property and extent of their respective improvements. In the event that the proponents do not meet the construction budget, there is an alternative proposal, which would include steps along the west side of the right-of-way.
- Would like to know if the team has addressed the drainage of the project, because the project seems to have a natural opportunity for creative, alternative systems such as a water feature or a pond in conjunction with the run-off from the site.
 - Proponents stated that the design is not complete, as they are waiting for finalized

drainage plans from the architects of the adjacent properties. There will be self-contained drainage at each levels. Further stated that the design does include a water feature at the base of the steps. Agreed that the water could be collected and filtered. Proponents stated that Seattle Transportation (SEATLAN) and the Department of Parks and Recreation (DOPAR) have expressed concern about the liability and maintenance issues related to the proposed fountains, but the proponents continue to encourage them to consider these options.

- Would like to know if the proponents are working with DOPAR to ensure the design of Gas Works Park across Northlake Way will be complementary.
 - Proponents stated that because of the increased development in this area, the context of the neighborhood is changing, and the team feels as though this is a good opportunity to implement Pro-Parks funding to improve this link to the park.
- Would like to know if SEATLAN is still concerned about the crossing at Northlake Way
 - Proponents stated that the best place to cross is further east, where there is an existing sidewalk leading into Gas Works Park. Further stated that at a later date, there might be a crosswalk that would be in line with the Wallingford Steps when the gateway changes are made.
- Would like to know the public benefit in relation to the improvements funded and completed by the adjacent properties, and is worried that the adjacent properties will claim the steps as their own.
 - Proponents stated that it will be maintained as a public right-of-way. Further stated that the elevators will be maintained for public use, which is part of the re-zone agreement. The proponents feel as though the activity of Wallingford Steps will be such that it does not seem like a private space. There will be a strong commercial connection to the public right-of-way. Further stated that the site is currently overgrown brush, and offers no public benefit.

07 July 2000 Project: **Growing Vine Street**

Phase: Briefing

Previous Review: 19 November 1998 (Update Briefing), 18 December 1997 (Schematics)

Presenter: Elizabeth Butler, Department of Neighborhoods

Greg Waddell, Carlson Architects

Attendees: Sam Bennett, Daily Journal of Commerce

Lyle Bicknell, CityDesign

John Eskelin, Department of Neighborhoods

Carolyn Geise, Geise Architects

Tawn Holstra, Alliance for Committed Civic Engagement and Social Solutions

Scott Kemp, Department of Design Construction and Land Use (DCLU)

A. M. Noel, Alliance for Committed Civic Engagement and Social Solutions

Sandy Pernitz, P-Patch

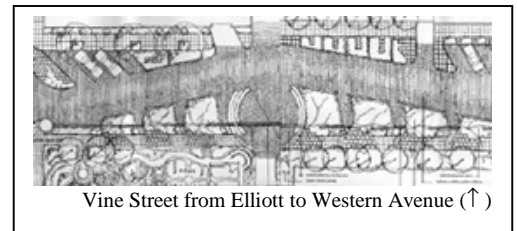
Jerry Suder, Department of Design Construction and Land Use (DCLU)

Joe Taskey, Seattle Transportation (SEATRAN)

Time: .5 hour (SDC Ref. # 220 | DC00011)

Action: The Commission appreciates the briefing and continues to support this project.

This Department of Neighborhoods Opportunity Funds project is part of a larger Growing Vine Street design. The area reviewed is part of the cistern steps concept on Vine Street from Elliott Avenue to Western Avenue. The cistern steps would become part of the streetscape, and the existing width of the street would “wobble,” and narrow to provide a varying width sidewalk on both sides of Vine Street. This portion of the sidewalk would contain plants, steps, and other features. The design team is working with (SEATRAN) in response to the concern of maintaining a minimum required twenty feet for Seattle Fire Department access. The north side of the block would have ramps for ADA accessibility, and access across the street to the P-Patch, which is at the southwest corner of this block. The design team is working with the developers, architects, and landscape architects of the adjacent buildings so the landscaping of the projects will be complementary. The team is also exploring the possibility of scraping the pavement to expose the cobblestone beneath. A portion of the design concept is based on storm water retention. The watershed from the buildings along the block would be collected and redistributed to the P-Patch in different ways that would expose the water, rather than directing it underground. There is support within the community for this project, and the team hopes to raise additional funds.



Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Would like to know the primary purpose of storm water retention.
 - Proponents stated that the original concept included a plan to filter the water through bioswales to redirect the water, rather than continuing through storm drains. Further stated that the team hopes that the potential for irrigation can be used as an education tool, and can be used to explain what types plants require varying amounts of water.
- Would like to know if the exposed cobblestones are a possibility.
 - Proponents stated that it would be an experiment to remove the pavement, and the team hopes that the cobblestones would not be damaged in the process.
- Would like to know where the collected storm water would be stored.

- Proponents stated that the design team would like the water to be incorporated as an art element on the exterior of a building along the block, and per storm water retention regulations. However, in this project, the water will be stored in a vault inside the Intracorp building.